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HEBRAICA SUPPLEMENT.

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Ante-Seminary Hebrew.

What are the facts in relation to the study of Hebrew in the seminary? What is the evil resulting from these facts? What is the remedy for this evil?

First: Students enter the theological seminary with preparation made for every department except one, the Hebrew. Their philosophical training in college has prepared them for the theological work; their historical training for the work in Church History; their training in classical Greek for the work in the New Testament; their rhetorical and literary work for the homiletical department. But for the Old Testament department no preparatory work of any kind has been performed. This is *one fact*.

Sight is lost of a most important item, that, properly speaking, the study of Hebrew as a language ought not to be included in the Old Testament department. On no just ground can purely linguistic instruction be legitimately expected of the professor of Hebrew, any more than of the professor of Greek. And yet, instead of giving to the department of Hebrew more time, in order that the language may be properly taught and there yet be left opportunity for historical, exegetical and theological work, in many seminaries an amount of time is allotted, even less than that given to some other department. *The second fact.*

The laborious and distasteful linguistic work is *done*, but too often only because it is required. The study is, seemingly, unprofitable. It is drudgery. The divinity student has been under the impression for years that his "preparatory" work was at an end, and he does not relish the idea of again submitting to the process of "drill." The task is a toilsome, disheartening one. Only that is done which *must* be done, and this without interest and without care. *The third fact.*

The professor of Hebrew, not sufficiently

courageous to hold the class down to that hard, uncompromising class-drill which is absolutely essential in order to gain the end desired, viz., a knowledge of Hebrew, yields too soon to any inclination to enter upon exegetical study. That very moment progress ceases. The effort of the student to do exegetical work without an accurate knowledge of the original languages to serve as a basis on which to rest the work, is a failure. No student is prepared, in any proper sense, for exegetical work, who has not a command of the language. Time, therefore, rightly belonging to the preliminary linguistic work is too frequently given up to what is called "exegesis." *The fourth fact.*

These, briefly stated, are the facts which exist in reference to Hebrew work, in most, if not in all, of our seminaries.

Secondly: What is the result of all this? What is the evil naturally following upon this state of affairs? The study of Hebrew to at least five out of ten men is absolutely valueless. The time spent by five out of ten men who undertake this study, is entirely lost. Is this not a stupendous evil? For this loss of time is not some one responsible? If a knowledge of Hebrew is worth having, shall a system be followed which, at the very best, gives that knowledge to one half, while the other half not only do not get it, but lose the time spent in the effort to get it? Is this knowledge so precious that all men preparing for the ministry shall be required to work for it, with the positive assurance beforehand that only one half can succeed? Shall only brilliant men be encouraged to study Hebrew, men who are known to be apt in linguistic study? Yet is not this knowledge, when gained, as serviceable, if serviceable at all, to one who attains it with difficulty, as to one who attains it easily? This is the evil: Every student who enters the theological seminary is encouraged, indeed required, to take up a

study, the chances being even that the time devoted to that study will be thrown away. The department of the Old Testament is so hedged about with difficulties, as to make it impossible for any man to get what he ought to have, and for five out of ten men to get anything. Hebrew is not kept up by the minister, after leaving the seminary, in *nine* cases out of ten, because, forsooth, a sufficient advance in the study was not made while in the seminary, to make it possible to do this with any sort of satisfaction.

Thirdly: Is this evil a remediless one? Is there anything to be done? Can a plan be adopted, which will guarantee to every theological student who undertakes the study of Hebrew, that his time will not be lost? We answer emphatically, *Yes*. Let preparatory Hebrew work be done, as well as preparatory Greek work. Such ample preparation for Hebrew cannot, of course, be made as for Greek. Nor is it needed. Let a student obtain, before entering the seminary, such a knowledge of the language as will enable him to read the historical Hebrew; that is, let him acquire a mastery of the most common principles of the language, a familiarity with the most frequently recurring words.

With this start, followed up by vigorous class-room drill in the seminary, he will gain such a hold of the language, such an acquaintance with its spirit and genius that the study will be one of pleasure and profit. He will *know* that there is to be an outcome to his work. The remedy we propose, therefore, is *ante-seminary Hebrew*, i. e., the study of Hebrew before entering the theological seminary.

But here two practical difficulties present themselves:

1) How is this knowledge to be gained? *Hebrew is not taught in colleges*. If there shall arise a demand for ante-seminary Hebrew instruction, a way will certainly be found to furnish it. In time Hebrew will be taught in the college. Meanwhile, providentially, we believe, a way has been opened by which any man desirous of this training can obtain

it. Through the INSTITUTE OF HEBREW, with its "Correspondence" and "Summer Schools" many men have prepared and are preparing themselves for the seminary.

2) But will provision be made in the seminary for men who enter the Junior class with some preparation in Hebrew? Will not such a one be compelled to wait until those who begin the study upon their entrance arrive at the point which he may have reached, or to crowd ahead into the Middle class? There may be some seminaries so lacking in efficiency and enterprise, as not to be able to provide for this class of men. There may be some professors of Hebrew so regardless of the interests of their own department, and so indifferent to the general interests of Bible study, as to refuse to furnish the necessary opportunities for such men. But such seminaries, and such professors may profitably be passed by. In every denomination, there are other seminaries in which it will be deemed a privilege to provide thus for students. To such seminaries, institutions of a wide-awake and aggressive spirit, the young men of our day should direct their footsteps.

There is no reason why preparatory work in Hebrew should not be done. There is every reason why it should be undertaken.

The time has come for young men to ask it, for the professors of Hebrew to encourage and in some measure require it, for the churches to furnish opportunities by which it may be gained.

An Important Announcement.

The work of the AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF HEBREW, now in its fourth year, has grown steadily in favor, and has enlisted the sympathy and co-operation of a large number of students and instructors. Up to this time, the INSTITUTE has been conducted largely as a personal undertaking; but the character and magnitude of its work, as well as its financial needs, render this no longer practicable.

It has been decided, therefore, to place the general management of the INSTITUTE,

i. e., (1) The Hebrew Summer Schools, and (2) The Hebrew Correspondence School, in the hands of a Board of Trustees, made up of Professors of Hebrew and of related departments (of different religious denominations, and residing in different sections of the country), who consent to take an active part in advancing the interests of the work.

The INSTITUTE will henceforth be conducted with the following ends in view :

(a) To furnish preparatory instruction in Hebrew to students about to enter the theological seminary; it being proposed to influence as large a number of prospective theological students as possible to avail themselves of the opportunities thus afforded, in order that the merely linguistic work in Hebrew may be performed, at least in part, outside of the seminary;

(b) To furnish elementary and advanced instruction in Hebrew to ministers engaged in the work of the pastorate;

(c) To furnish opportunities for the study of the cognate languages, and such historical, literary and theological subjects, connected with the Old Testament, as may be desired.

The general character of the INSTITUTE will be undenominational; and all, of whatever faith, who are interested in Old Testament studies, will be invited to participate.

No educational work of a high order can be conducted merely upon the basis of the receipts from tuition-fees. This fact is recognized by all who have given attention to the question of education. The work proposed by the INSTITUTE is, really, a theological work. It aims to prepare men for the seminary, in that department in which preparation is especially lacking, and it aims to assist men, after leaving the seminary, to carry on systematic study in that department which, more than all others, is likely to be neglected. Upon this ground, therefore, it appeals to large-hearted, liberal-minded men of all denominations for funds:

a) To be used in connection with the regular revenue from tuition-fees, in meeting the general expense of the "Schools," and the salaries of instructors;

b) To be used in assisting men to avail themselves of the opportunities here offered, who would not otherwise be able to do so.

It is not deemed wise, even by those who have the future of the INSTITUTE most at heart, to attempt at present to secure funds for a permanent endowment. Nor, on the other hand, is it possible to raise each year the sum of money needed for the expense of that year. It is proposed, therefore, to secure subscriptions towards what shall be called "A FIVE YEARS' ENDOWMENT FUND." That is, a given sum will be subscribed, payable every year for five years. By this method, greater stability will be guaranteed; and at the same time the labor and expense of raising the money will be largely diminished.

The Catalogue of the Institute.

The special attention of the students of the Hebrew Correspondence School is called to the Catalogue to be published in January next. It is very desirable that every person who is really a member, be included in the list. Only those, however, can fairly be considered members who have prepared and sent in for correction as many as *ten* lessons during 1884, unless they have been unavoidably hindered, or have entered so near the end of the year as to make it impossible.

Resuming Work.

There are still some members who have not taken up the lessons since vacation. Of course there are many hindrances that may arise to cause delay, and among so many students there will always be some who have just reason for suspending their work. But no ordinary cause should be allowed to interpose. This work is not one of the minister's "extras," but a part of his regular biblical study, and so has a right to a definitive allotment of his time. "The best way to resume is to resume." Will not those who have not yet recommenced study please communicate at once with the Principal by means of a recitation or, if that is impossible, by postal.

The Summer Schools.

In the HEBRAICA SUPPLEMENT for April we spoke of the advantages to be gained by the members of the Correspondence School from attendance on the Summer Schools. A large percentage of the students in each of the three schools this past summer were from the Correspondence School. They were among the most enthusiastic and successful students present, and what they were able to accomplish fully justified the remarks in the article referred to above. The solid and lasting benefit accruing from a few weeks of earnest work, the real hold upon the language that can thus be gained are being recognized more and more. Let every member that can possibly do so, shape his course this year with the plan of coming to the Summer School in 1885. Everything gained beforehand is so much advantage then. The courses of work are made so to correspond that one can continue his study from one school to the other just as in the same school.

If a minister unacquainted with Hebrew had wished a few years ago to learn the language, he might well have been discouraged by the lack of facilities for study either at home or elsewhere; but now it is not only possible but is an easy and inexpensive matter to obtain such a familiarity with Hebrew as will make the reading of a page a day a recreation, and open boundless stores of Scriptural knowledge. This cannot be accomplished in a month, nor in six months, but it need not take more than two or three years of study, that can be carried on amid the regular duties of the pastorate without overcrowding, and during the summer vacation without the loss of needed recreation. Those who have been members of both schools know this by experience. We hope that an increasing number may test it every year.

New Members.

There have been a large number of additions to the Correspondence School since the beginning of September. More have come

from the Methodist denomination than from any other, and more from Ohio than from any other state. Among the papers that have been sent in, nearly all of which are of excellent character, several were so nearly perfect that we regret that they were not quite so. Shall the Ohio brethren lead?

Perfect Papers.

Since our last issue faultless recitations have been received from the following students:

- Rev. W. D. Akers, Rural Retreat, Va., El. 18.
- " J. J. Anderson, Tuscaloosa, Ala., Pr. 22.
- Prof. C. H. Cole, Hastings, Mich., El. 12.
- Rev. J. M. C. Fulton, Oxford, N. Y., El. 19 and Int. 3.
- " E. A. Mason, Farmington, Me., El. 1.
- " F. M. Mitchell, Kane, Ill., Int. 19.
- " F. P. Ramsay, Dublin, Va., Int. 13, 14, and 17.
- " H. Van der Ploeg, Fulton, Ill., Int. 26.
- " J. T. Whitley, Salisbury, Md., El. 23.

Graduations.

FROM THE ELEMENTARY COURSE.

- Rev. H. W. Coffin, Plymouth, Mass.
- " Sidney Crawford, Lyons, Ia.
- " T. F. Drake, Burlington, Ind.
- " J. M. C. Fulton, Oxford, N. Y.
- " M. L. Gates, McPherson, Kas.
- Mr. Jas. Hammond, Olathe, Kas.
- Rev. M. P. Hayden, Ludlow, Ill.
- " G. G. Hudson, Auburn, Ill.
- " C. H. Lyons, LaGrange, Ga.
- Prof. P. Robertson, Dayton, O.
- Rev. A. M. Smeallie, Kortright, N. Y.
- " E. A. Starkey, Dayton, O.
- Mr. J. H. Thomas, Dayton, O.
- Rev. A. Waterbury, Rensselaerville, N. Y.
- Prof. Scott Williams, Rockland, Mich.
- " Harry Willis, Philadelphia, Pa.

FROM THE INTERMEDIATE COURSE.

- Rev. R. C. Armstrong, Waxahachie, Tex.
- Mr. Adam Charlton, Lynedoch, Ont.
- Rev. D. F. Estes, Atlanta, Ga.
- " T. M. Evans, Sharon, Pa.
- " J. W. Fox, Kewanee, Ill.
- Miss H. M. Prescott, Philadelphia, Pa.
- Rev. H. F. Smith, Mt. Holly, N. J.
- Mr. D. J. Strang, Monmouth, Ill.
- Rev. F. G. Woodworth, Wolcott, Conn.

FROM THE PROGRESSIVE COURSE.

- Rev. C. C. Hersman, Fulton, Mo.
- Mr. G. R. Hovey, Newton Center, Mass.
- Rev. J. B. Purcell, Mt. Washington, Md.